(iii) Public Call Offices (PCOs) are being liberally sanctioned and opened in low density telephone areas subject to availability of coin collection box instruments and opening of PCOs manned by handicapped persons is being encouraged.

(iv) Waiting list for new telephone connections registered upto September, 1986 is targetted to be cleared by 1990.

(v) Increased maintenance efforts are being made to maintain satisfactory level of service in old exchanges where quality of service suffers sometimes due to shortage of spare parts.

Malpractices in the purchase of drop wire, jumper wire and switch board cables

1371. SHRI KANHU CHARAN LENKA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether complaints have been received from the Chamber of Indian Trade & Industry and several Members of Parliament about the malpractices in the purchases of drop wire, jumper wire and switch board cables by General Manager, Telecom Stores, Calcutta and CTS New Delhi;

(b) whether any departmental enquiry has been made to investigate the abvoe complaints; if so, what are the details of the findings of the enquiry; and

(c) what action Government have taken against the officers responsible therefor?

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY AND THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI VASANT SATHE): (a) Yes, Sir. We have received complaints from two M.Ps. regarding purchase of drop wire. We have also received complaints from Chamber of Indian Trade & Industry regarding purchase of Drop Wire, Switch board cables and jumper wire.

(b) Yes, Sir. Investigations have been conducted and it is found that the purchases made are in order. Complaints have been replied suitably.

(c) Does not arise in view of 'b' above.

Bakreshwar Thermal Power Project

1372. SHRIMATI KANAK MUKHERJEE: Will the Minister of ENERGY be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question 721 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 29th February, 1988 and state:

(a) what are the specific problems of the Bakreshwar Thermal Power Project proposed to be set up by the West Bengal Government in the State Public Sector; and

(b) at what stage the project rests now?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF POWER IN THE MINISTRY OF ENERGY (SHRIMATI SUSHILA ROHATGI): (a) and (b) The Planning Commission have accepted, 'in principle', the feasibility of the Bakreswar thermal power project (3x210 MW) in West Bengal, subject to adequate financial provision being made in the State Plan and clearance being obtained from the forestry angle in regard to acquisition of land required for the ash disposal system. The State authorities were also authorised to start work on infrastructure development with the available funds.

It has, keeping in view the constraints of resources, been proposed to implement the project with external bilateral assistance. It would be possible to consider execution of the project in the Central Sector only after the arrangements suggested are agreed to by the State authorities.

Number of telephone exchanges

1373. SHRI V. GOPALSAMY:
SHRI A. G. KULKARNI:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the Statewise total number of telephone exchanges in the country;